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BACKGROUND OF IRAQI-IRANIAN CONFLICT REVIEWED

London AL-HAWADITH in Arabic 28 Dec 79 p 14

[Article: "Baghdad Brings Up the Arab-Farsi Dispute, and Teheran Shows Some Flexibility!"]

[Text] Nine months before the name Ayatollah Khomeini flashed out in the international press, and before the Iraqi government imposed a ban on his political activity while he was staying at al-Najaf during the July 1978 festivals, a French information delegation including a television crew came to Baghdad to cover the celebrations. The day after the French delegation arrived in the Iraqi capital, one of the television crew members pulled out of his pocket a piece of paper on which a certain address was written, and gave it to the escort assigned to the delegation by the Iraqi Information Ministry so that he could direct him. The escort did so, without it ever occurring to him that this even would stir up an international uproar, for very few people had ever heard of Khomeini.

The French television journalist went with a team from his delegation to the address given him and conducted an important interview with Khomeini--his first appearance to the outside world. But the interview was not broadcast. It was stored away in the French television archives and the Iraqi authorities did not learn of it, inasmuch as the escort did not notice anything out of the ordinary but assumed that he was performing a touristic duty.

The person in Paris who gave the address to the French journalist was Sadegh Ghotbzadeh, who now holds the post of foreign minister in addition to being responsible for the Guidance Ministry which includes radio and television, and who was on Khomeini's original staff.

Fully 9 months after this incident, when the Baghdad government had banned Khomeini's activity in accordance with a good neighbor policy with Iran in implementation of the Algiers agreement provisions, the Paris television segment was dusted off and broadcast, and it caused quite a reverberation. The Iraqi government lost its mind, thinking that there was some deficiency in the functioning of its agencies that French television could penetrate. A crisis almost occurred between Baghdad and Paris, although the investigation conducted immediately by Iraqi authorities confirmed beyond doubt

that the interview was an old one and had been conducted in the manner mentioned 9 months earlier!

It appears that Sadegh Ghotbzadeh, who has good relations with the Syrians and harbors more than one grudge against the present regime in Iraq, had achieved a certain reputation for following and observing Iraqi information and understanding its motivations, especially Iraqi information in Paris and London, where Ghotbzadeh moved about with complete freedom. Whenever a news item, commentary or investigation of Iran appeared during the final 3 years of the Shah's reign, whether against or in favor of the Shah, Ghotbzadeh would try to find out whether it was inspired by Baghdad or was just a journalistic sortie expressing nothing more than its author's opinion. However, he carried out this inspection very minutely.

In spite of all the phenomena accompanying the recent Iranian-American crisis, and in spite of Iran's interference in some Arab affairs, Baghdad remains Teheran's greatest bugaboo, and it is more watchful towards Iraq than anywhere else. Therefore, it is not strange that Iranian-Iraqi relations have sunk so low that last week Iraq almost severed its relations with Iran completely, especially now that Sadegh Ghotbzadeh has taken the helm of Khomeini's diplomacy.

Although some mediators between the two capitals believe that the worsening of the crisis between the two is the entry point for mutual understanding in the long run, in the short run the currently prevailing atmosphere does not augur that. What has attracted the attention of observers and mediators is that the Iraqis are speaking from a position of strength, especially since those to whom mediation with Teheran is suggested say that Iran is the one who ought to want mediation!

This was confirmed when Baghdad, speaking through Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz in a press conference in which he comprehensively reviewed his country's policy towards Iran, threatened to sever relations with Teheran if the Iranian authorities did not release the Iraqi students detained in Iran; the Iranian authorities lost no time in releasing the detained Iraqis, and began to show some flexibility towards its neighbor.

It can be concluded from the review of the situation presented by Tariq 'Aziz that the relations between the two countries could return to normal once Iran stops interfering in Iraq's internal affairs. This is the first official Iraqi reference to Iranian interference in Iraq. It appears that Baghdad had discussed that openly after it was proven to them that Iraq had a hand in setting off the bloody incidents in the courtyard of the Imam 'Ali Mosque in Karbala' during the Ashura' celebrations, where there was a massacre the victims of which were said to number more than 15 dead, not to mention the wounded.

In the Iranians' estimation, what the Iraqis want is to prevent Iran from interfering not only in Iraq's affairs but in all Arab affairs, by stating

the problem as being an Arab-Farsi one, as the Iraqi deputy prime minister said. The Iranians say that the problem lies not in Iran's interfering in Arab affairs, or in Gulf affairs to be precise, but is a problem between the Arab Islamic peoples and their rulers, and that it is only natural for the people to see hope and support in the Islamic revolution in Iran.

But Tariq 'Aziz accused Iran of bad intentions when it broadcast news that the Iraqi forces had launched an attack on Iranian territory at the peak of the crisis between Teheran and Washington, so that Iraq would appear to Arab and world public opinion as serving American political purposes!

On this point the Iraqis have expressed the broader viewpoint that it is Iranian measures in the crisis with America which are serving American plans, since they give America the excuse it was looking for to undertake military action in the region, or at least increase its military presence, thereby threatening to ignite the whole region.

Iraqi rage at Iran's fervor for the fundamental Arab cause--the Palestinian issue--is also based on a theory which enters into the framework of the Arab-Farsi struggle as explained by Teheran. The Iraqis say that Iran cannot be Arab in Palestine and expansionist Farsi in the Gulf. If its fervor for the Arab cause is sincere and real, the only thing it has to do to prove that is to give up the three Arab islands in the Gulf (Abu-Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs) which the Shah occupied, and return to recognizing Iraqi sovereignty over the whole Shatt al-'Arab, which is a historic sovereignty dating back to the treaty of 1936, part of which Iraq was forced to relinquish. Iran should also renounce any claims to Bahrain.

Iran's excuse to the Arabs about these matters is extremely weak, but some anti-Iraqi Iranian officials say that the Iraqi government is politically exploiting this issue. They ask why Iraq did not defend the islands when the Shah occupied them. They say that Iraq's renunciation of part of its sovereignty over the Shatt al-'Arab was not because of the October War and Iraq's being forced to take part in the war on the Syrian front, because this renunciation happened 2 years after the October War and for purely Iraqi reasons, pertaining to the Kurdish revolt in northern Iraq. The Iraqis exchanged their sovereignty over the Shatt al-'Arab for sovereignty over the Kurdish region!

An Iranian religious man told a Lebanese deputy who was trying to find out his response to Iraq's bringing up the problem with Iran, "The Iraqis are the ones who are provoking us, and the greatest provocation is that they allow a non-Moslem (meaning Tariq 'Aziz) to present their anti-Iranian viewpoint!" When the Lebanese deputy said to him, "It is true that the Iraqi society is Islamic, but it is also true that the Iraqi government is a secular one and the Iraqi state has always been a quasi-secular state," the religious man answered, "And what is secularism except hostility towards Islam?"

8559

CSO: 4802

PAPER SEES U.S. IRRESOLUTE BEFORE SOVIET EXPANSIONISM

London AL-HAWADITH in Arabic 4 Jan 80 p 8

[Article by Salim al-Lawzi: "Soviet Boots Tramp Their Way to Warm Sea"]

[Text] The Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan has confirmed once more that there are no stable and definitive boundaries to international detente, for Afghanistan is not one of the Socialist countries which agreed at the Yalta Conference to be included in the Soviet bloc, on which the Kremlin leaders consequently had the right to impose the pax Sovietica, as they did in Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1968. If their might had been able to extend into the ruling Communist regime in Yugoslavia, then in Romania, and found stronger allies, capable of confronting Tito and Ceausescu, they would have repeated the military experience which they had in Budapest and Prague.

During the past 10 years, it used to be said that the limits of the detente between Moscow and Washington were controlled by the balance of nuclear terror. They used to set flexible limits and laws on these boundaries, saying, for example, that placing Soviet rockets in Cuba was a trespass of the bounds of tolerability which must be corrected and that the intervention of the Soviets in Angola, Ethiopia, and Aden, even through the Cubans and East Germans, was a blow below the belt which should not be repeated. As for the direct military operation in which the Soviet army engaged in Afghanistan, it is a clear and manifest penetration of the ceiling of international detente, which the existence of a treaty of friendship between Moscow and Kabul does not warrant, nor does the excuse that the Islamic Afghan government was menacing the southern security of the Soviet Union and having bad effects on the millions of Moslems of whom the Soviet Islamic republics consist. The truth and the facts indicate that the Soviets are expanding their sphere of influence according to precise calculations of the military changes in the balance of power between themselves and the United States in particular and between themselves and the west Europeans in general.

The balance of power rests not only on the number of intercontinental missiles which carry nuclear bombs, the number of aircraft, the fleets, and the armies, but also on the psychological state of the adversary. When the Americans' will to fight was strong, the Soviets wavered, as they did in Berlin after the end of the war, in Azerbaijan, in Greece, then in Cuba, and in the Middle East more than once. But when the will to fight in the United States spirit diminishes, the Soviets push the boundaries of detente past all the charters, divisions, and spheres of influence which were agreed on previously.

What happened in Kabul is disturbing indeed -- more disturbing than what happened before in Hungary and Czechoslovakia and in Aden. The Soviet army intruded on Hafizollah Amin, president of the country, who had contracted a treaty of friendship with them, then arrested him, then tried him, and then condemned him. Furthermore, reports affirm that he was tried on paper, that is, the execution was performed before the trial, as is the practice of progressive revolutionary regimes. They set up a regime and placed at its head an agent of their own who had spent the most important years of his life in the nations of the Soviet bloc. This they did in the name of the friendship treaty which the progressive leaders of the Khalaf Party had contracted (may God have mercy on his soul!), and they did not hesitate to describe the government of their former agent Hafizollah Amin as having been a bloody, fascist regime which shed the blood of the Afghan people and robbed them of their rights (in consideration that they came to restore the rights of the Afghan people).

The prevailing opinion and estimates are that the Americans are not disposed to respond to the Soviet military operation in Afghanistan beyond disapproving and criticizing the Soviet expansionist policy and the ambitions of the leaders in the Kremlin to reach the warm sea and the areas of the petroleum fields in the Middle East. But when have protest and criticism ever restored freedom and independence to an occupied country?

Indeed, the Soviets gathered the first of the fruits of the absurd dispute between the Islamic revolution in Iran and the administration of President Carter in Washington. And the rest of the fruits are waiting along the road.

INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

BRIEFS

CHINESE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS FOR ARAB COUNTRIES--The labor ministries of several Arab countries are negotiating with China's Labor Ministry [sic] over the sending of a large number of Chinese laborers, aged 18 to 35, for employment in construction work. The Chinese officials are demanding that the workers' wages, ranging from 170 to 250 pounds sterling per worker per month, be paid directly to the Chinese Government. The remaining issues before the negotiators include the question of appropriate housing and social conditions, and China's demand that the workers receive free tutoring in the Arabic language. The negotiations are prompted by a desire on the part of West Asian and Gulf states to diversify the ethnic makeup of their foreign workforce. [Text] [Paris AL-MUSTAQBAL in Arabic 22 Dec 79 p 17] 9063

NON-PERMANENT ARAB LEAGUE OFFICE--The Secretary General of the Arab League, Mr Al-Shazli al-Qulaybi, has decided to establish a second office in Beirut. This information was disclosed last Friday, following a meeting between Mr al-Qulaybi's representative, Mr Hamadi al-Sayd, and Lebanon's foreign minister, Fu'ad Butrus. Despite its precarious situation, the Secretary General still views Beirut as an ideal location for carrying out his diplomatic work in the Middle East. The Lebanese Government has given its preliminary approval to the idea, but has postponed discussion of the secretary's other requests until he visits Beirut personally. Among these requests is the question of granting diplomatic immunity and other privileges to the personnel who will staff the new office. According to informed sources, the Secretary General intends to use the Beirut office as a second, non-permanent headquarters for himself and his senior aids. [Text] [Paris AL-MUSTAQBAL in Arabic 29 Dec 79 p 17] 9063

CSO: 4802

MOROCCAN GOVERNMENT REACTS TO SPREAD OF ISLAMIC MOVEMENT

Paris AL-NAHAR AL-'ARABI WA AL-DUWALI in Arabic 31 Dec 79-6 Jan 80 pp 21-22

[Article by Ahmad al-Zawawi: "Arab Maghreb: 'Islamic Expansion' Knocks on Doors of Government; Multiplicity of Islamic Associations in Rabat Weakens Their Actions"]

[Text] In the few weeks that followed the attack on the Holy Mosque in Mecca, Moroccan authorities launched a broad campaign of arrests amidst the ranks of the Islamic associations. This campaign encompassed the cities and some of the nomads. Some people have been released, whereas others were detained for questioning and for trial. They were charged with infringing upon public safety. No official agency issued a statement regarding this campaign which was also ignored by the various official and opposition media.

In Tunisia, Prime Minister Hedi Nouira attacked the Islamic associations. The authorities did not hesitate to suppress the leaders of this movement, such as the director of AL-MUJTAMA' newspaper, nor did they hesitate to harass those who are affiliated with this movement.

Can it be said that the "Islamic expansion" or the "Islamic onslaught" has come into the Arab Maghreb.

The facts state that the Islamic movements in Rabat and in Tunis are trying to play a role that is called coming to power in both countries. But government circles and also the opposition in both countries do not think that these movements are effective.

If Rabat is more capable of effecting a confrontation [with the Islamic Movement] because the royal regime, and specifically King Hasan, has a basic religious capacity that enables him to justify western-style modernization in the country, the government in Tunis where the regime has a secular orientation, resorted to fighting the Ikhwanjiyah--[the reference is to al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin, the Moslem Brotherhood]--by directing the imams of the mosques with which they are affiliated to make speeches that refute their positions.

There are numerous Islamic associations in Morocco. Among them, for example, are the Association of Ordering Good and Forbidding Evil; the Association of

Missionary Activity and Communication; the Association of Prayer to God; the Dar al-Koran Association; the Yasin Group Association; the Islamic Ba'th Association; and the Islamic Youth Association.

Most of these associations pursue their activities openly and are recognized by the authorities. But their activities in the mosques are confined to Islamic missionary activity that is carried out by young men who grow their beards to distinguish themselves from those who inherited their Islam. This missionary activity is based on praying in the customary procedure; reading the Koran; rejecting the heresies that are alien to Islam and the distinctions [that are perceived] between the Sunna and the Shi'a; uniting Moslems in a state that transcends ideologies and regimes; and criticizing some phenomena that they believe demonstrate a moral and a cultural decline, such as considering women to be equal to men and [allowing] the sexes to mingle socially.

Morocco's Condition as They See It

AL-JAMA'AH Magazine is published by the Yasin Group Association, and AL-NUR Magazine is published by the Islamic Ba'th Association. We read the following [account] about the situation in Morocco in AL-JAMA'AH: "After God purged our country from the disgrace of colonialism, Morocco was expected to set itself on the correct course and to resume Islamic life and return to Islamic law. But what happened was the opposite. This is because the enemy did not leave our country until he placed the reins of power in the hands of those who had grown up in his care. Almost a quarter of a century has elapsed since our independence, and our relations with the non-believers have only grown. The methods and the systems that control the institutions of our lives are those of the non-believers. Although there is a constitution which states that Islam is the religion of the state, we are asking where are the manifestations of Islam in our life? Are they in the oppressive laws with which we are ruled and to which we appeal? Do the manifestations of Islam make themselves evident in our democratic political system which has resulted in all the misfortunes that our society has been experiencing? Who permitted this atheism that is rampant among our young people and these destructive principles that destroy our minds and our consciences to enter into our society? Was it not the democratic system that protects the freedom of religion? Who opened the door to this sexual chaos that turned Morocco into a nest of prostitution that is frequented by people from everywhere? We have shamefully, impudently and recklessly separated religion from life, and we have confined Islam to rites of worship and personal affairs. Do we stay in the tranquillity of the mosque, or do we go out to the battlefield of the holy war? Our society is depraved and corrupt. Is it enough that we move back to [considerations of] customary procedures, or should we fight the holy war and carry the banner of Islam?

"Politics, economics and management are entrusted to an exploitative class that has turned its back on its religion. The laws of God are being violated; should we be quiet and accept the positive law? Legal opinions are impudently published by scholars of evil in our media; do we accept this and claim that we are Moslems? Our dealings are based on interest, and taking

people's money be deceiving them is the method of our life. Is this what following tradition has prepared us for? Do we pass over this in silence or do we fight? Those who are trying to utilize appearances to draw people away from the ways of their prophet are only afraid that Islam may be revived in people's hearts through the contacts it makes with the source of life and power, and that is, the love of God and His prophet. Obedience to God and the repudiation of obedience to all else is the result of godliness."

Government Seekers

We read [the following account] that emanates from the same religious premise; it is about the role of the parties and the role of these associations.

"Islam does not consist of these slogans that are proclaimed by parties to deceive, to dissemble and to toy with values. We are seeking the government, [and] we want to assume the reins of power by means of having the people choose and select. This is what democracy permits, and this is what we want. We support democracy and its laws if they are applied without falsification. People will be with us when they get our message. If Moslems must prepare themselves for the responsibility of government, the strength and serenity [that such a role requires] do not allow us to be complacent and to dilute our Islamic character in the muddle of freedom and the distortion of its methods while our Islamic character is being formed. Democracy from this Islamic perspective is only an entity that is discordant with the nation and is in basic conflict with it. This conflict lies in the fact that those who are overseeing the government are out of touch with the people whom they have disowned and tried to eradicate. These partial conflicts are sufficient to impose imaginary ties upon parts of the organization and upon the basic conflict which would one day sweep away democracy, tribalism and all ideologies. [The question] that would then be raised is, "Where is Islam?" In this context questions about the means that are necessary to achieve this Islamic ideal are numerous:

"Establishing an Islamic society that concerns itself with defending the rights of workers and citizens is one of those means. The Islamic void that exists among the ranks of the workers comes from the fact that they compare Islamic action and party action. These parties have trade union organizations that constitute their base, or rather the front which justifies the slogan of defending the working people. The principal lines of total Islamic action consist of our organizing ourselves into one Islamic entity throughout the country and having an Islamic union."

While they wait for these organizations to see the light, al-Ikhwan [the Moslem Brothers] are being called upon to take the public by the hand and to teach them in small groups about piety. [They are being asked to] teach them the Islamic books of al-Ikhwan, such as the books of Sayyid Qutb, Sa'id Ramadan and others. But open action is the prevailing trend now because "the method of violent secret organizing is the method of the ultra-left in the ignorant West. In addition, this method provides opportunities for forgery and for taking advantage of the means of control and enforcing obedience." The best example of this method is the Islamic Movement in Iran and in Pakistan.

Morocco's Special Situation

But how far can these associations go? We must first recall the special situation in Morocco. The current Moroccan constitution, like all the constitutions that preceded it, stipulates in one of its articles that Islam is the state's official religion and that the king is the prince of the faithful. That is, he is the primary man of religion in the country. This explains the strong support he has from the scholars whose power is indisputable.

The sect that is adhered to in Morocco is that of al-Malikiyyah which the Moroccan monarch called a factor for unity among all the Moroccans when he addressed parliament last October. The speeches of King Hasan the Second abound in references to the Koran and to the prophetic tradition, both of which he knows well. King Hasan is continuously trying to reconcile the provisions of Islam with the requirements of modernization in the context of what is called, rightly or wrongly, the liberal policy. At any rate this liberalism has its limits. Most Moroccan laws are derived from the more modern European legislation, but the personal status law still reflects the provisions of Islamic law to a large degree, especially with regard to divorce cases, polygamy and the rights of women. In the context of this rigorous [adherence] to Islam, Moroccan criminal law punishes Moslems who follow any religion other than Islam or eat in public during the month of Ramadan.

All students must spend 2 years studying the Koran. All baccalaureate candidates take an examination in the subject of Islamic education which will become mandatory. The larger part of philosophy lessons are now almost based on Islamic thought, and especially on the al-Salafi thought [the Islamic reform movement founded by Muhammad 'Abduh in Egypt in the second half of the 19th century]. Professors of this subject are not pleased about this matter. A law making alms mandatory to all those who meet the conditions of giving alms will soon be enacted.

King Hasan the Second is still stating that Islamic socialism which rejects exploitative capitalism and atheistic socialism is the best system for Morocco. On their part Moroccan opposition parties treat religion as one of the basic factors of political life. They focus on the revolutionary factors in the religion just as the other Arab parties that are affiliated with the left do.

The Distant Road

The mergence of these associations on the Moroccan political scene will not do much to change the current balance of power in the short range or in the long range. Nor will it bring about an upset in the rules of the political game in Morocco.

A religious speech is not as attractive or as persuasive that it rises to the level of the aspirations and the hopes of the majority of the people.

If some groups do turn to this speech, the reaction of young people is one of rejection, especially since many aspects of this speech bring to mind the claim of men of the cloth who are accused by these groups of convening annual conferences, just like the parties do, and of issuing resolutions and recommendations that are neither here nor there. Even the call to fight the manifestations of corruption can be met by nothing but suspicion. The Iranian Revolution, which is portrayed by those people as an example of the establishment of an Islamic state is no longer being met with the enthusiasms that it used to arouse at its inception.

These people are viewed in political circles as people who constitute only minority groups that have no political weight when compared with similar associations in the Arab east even though their members and sympathizers are highly qualified engineers, university professors and attorneys.

But the largest obstacle in front of these associations is presented by their multiplicity, their fragmentation and their inability to form themselves into one Islamic organization for the entire country. A group that adopts total secrecy cannot become assimilated with another worldwide group abroad. This would require that it be merged with a local group and that this merger be approved by the parent organization. This would make containment of these groups as well as strikes against them easy.

8592

CSO: 4402

ISLAMIC MOVEMENT IN TUNISIA NOT REGARDED AS SERIOUS THREAT

Paris AL-NAHAR AL-'ARABI WA AL-DUWALI in Arabic 31 Dec 79-6 Jan 80 pp 22-23

[Article by 'Abd-al-Latif al-Furati: "The Opposition and the Government: 'The Danger' Is Not at Hand"]

[Text] After meeting recently with Tunisian president Habib Bourguiba Mohamed Sayah, director of the Destourian Socialist Party, which is the ruling party and the only party in the country, announced that the Tunisian president had advised him to choose "the best and the most beneficial methods for preserving the national gains and achieving further progress for our society away from destructive movements and tendencies that seek to assume control while hiding behind false and deceptive slogans."

This was early in December. Immediately afterwards a campaign against the Islamic Movement began both in the press of the Destourian Party and in the different meetings of the party.

The Islamic Movement has been gaining strength for several years and has reached its maximum strength in recent months by means of mobilizing large numbers of university students and young intellectuals and by means of containing fundamental secondary education for years.

The effects of the Islamic Movement--it is called al-Ikhwanji Movement in Tunisia in reference to al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin, the Moslem Brotherhood--have appeared in various ways. Young men are letting their beards grow; there is a return to a kind of veil that resembles what the Christian White Sisters use; and different expressions such as "Prayer is the mainstay of religion" and "Anyone who does not pray has abandoned his religion" are being written on the walls everywhere. [The effects of the Islamic Movement] have even appeared in defiance to government resolutions and to the policy of the government which has been characterized by secularism ever since it came into existence 20 years ago. It had prescribed what resembles a separation between religion and the state in spite of the fact that the constitution of the state proclaims Islam as the religion of the state.

This had resulted in a number of reforms that made Tunisia a very progressive country in the area of personal affairs and tolerance.

Does the spread of the Islamic Movement signify that the movement wants to do away with what has been considered here and abroad--and especially in the West--a very significant accomplishment?

Proponents of the movement proclaim that they only want to fight non-Islamic phenomena. But talking in depth with them ultimately leads one to discover that they have other intentions. They look upon what the government and the intellectual liberal groups regard as gains to be retrogression from Islam.

The Confrontation

At the same time there are actions that counter the Islamic Movement.

1. Articles in the party's newspapers. The French language newspaper L'ACTION had launched the campaign with a lengthy article in which it stated [the following]:

"...We recognize the reactionary, dangerous and feigned servility of those who are today proclaiming their faiths as champions of Islam in Tunisia. It is as though Islam were threatened at a time when it had never been as prosperous as it is now."

"What Bourguiba has proposed to spread Islam after freeing religion from worn out customs is to be considered a living example of what every Islamic nation must do to confront the challenges of the age and bring about [its own] advancement and progress."

"...The road to the removal of danger is decidedly one. It is represented by strengthening the national front; thwarting and exposing those impostors; revealing their ignorance and their reactionary [mentality]; disclosing the fact that they are using religion as a means to an end; and stopping the threat they pose by using religion to conceal their destructive intentions while seeking to overthrow the most valuable gains that have been achieved by the nation."

The weekly magazine DIALOGUE states:

"The matter has not come to the point of our being apprehensive about the future of Tunisia from this handful of swindlers. But the matter does require further clarity to expose this handful of people and to wipe out their nihilistic theories."

2. A political campaign that consisted specifically of a series of meetings held by Mohamed Sayah. He had said during those meetings, "The real intentions of those who are speaking on behalf of the Islamic religion in Tunisia have been revealed, and their positions are no longer concealed from anyone."

The director of the party indicated that two trends had emerged from these positions. "The first one is a chaotic trend that adopts the Marxist method

of taking advantage of opportunities to arouse civil strife and discord and to destroy the values and the principles for whose establishment the Tunisian people had sacrificed. The method of taking advantage of places of worship for these objectives had been tried in the past by the Communist Party in Tunisia, but it had not been successful. Those who are now advocating civil strife will have the same outcome.

"The second trend is a reactionary one whose proponents advocate intellectual rigor. They adhere to a social system that has become extinct and has expired."

"Some of those people have contacts with foreign powers that will be revealed at the suitable time. The purpose of the chaos they are advocating is to make Tunisia an easy morsel for foreign political powers who are seeking to impose their control over this area."

"The Destourians are to continue serving the people by contacting citizens directly, by raising their consciousness and by giving them guidance. Those men who can distinguish between alternatives and who have courage and willingness to sacrifice must be found."

Some sources are saying that this could mean that preachers who are party supporters will be sent to the mosques to give lessons and to stem the influence of the advocates of the Islamic Movement.

3 The newspapers of the Islamic Movement have been suspended. Almost at the same time a decision was announced by the assistant public prosecutor requiring the newspaper, AL-MUJTAMA' to cease publication; confiscating numbers 6 and 7 of the newspaper; and referring its director and editor-in-chief to the court to be put on trial.

The charge that has been leveled against the newspaper consists of [the following]:

Infringing upon the regime.

Proclaiming revolutionary positions.

Publishing false news.

The newspaper, AL-MUJTAMA' had come out 2 years ago as an ordinary social newspaper. It ceased publication after a while, but it was taken over by the Islamic Movement 2 months ago. The Islamic Movement has a monthly magazine called AL-MA'RIFAH. The newspaper, AL-MUJTAMA' has now become the mouthpiece of the Islamic Movement. It supports the continuation of Imam Khomeyni, and it has been attacking Saudi Arabia and the Arab regimes in general ever since the summit conference refused to support the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

It also seems that publication of AL-MA'RIFAH has become a doubtful matter after the printing presses where it was printed refused to continue printing it even though it has not been ordered to cease publication.

Reasons and Reactions

What are the reasons for the spread of the Islamic Movement in Tunisia, and what are the reactions [to this situation] following the developments of recent days?

This movement experienced an age of revival as a result of the relative liberalism that the country did experience when Hedi Nouira became the head of government 10 years ago. The Islamic Movement demonstrated its dynamic qualities through the educated young people who had been hurt by the materialistic phenomena that were becoming prevalent in society.

But the development which this movement did experience in the last 2 years has been very significant for several reasons:

1. The call to return to "True Islam" has spread to more than one Islamic society. The fact that this call did achieve the seat of government in Iran has encouraged the remaining movements in the different Islamic countries, and Tunisia is among those countries.
2. The movement emerged in student circles in Tunisia as the primary opponent to the Marxist Movement. Its success in containing the Marxist Movement amidst the students made it quite trustworthy.
3. There has been no power capable of attracting the opponents of the ruling Destourian Party ever since the events of January 1978. Disbanding the former leadership of the federation of unions has led to strengthening the ranks of the Islamic Movement.

The development of the Islamic Movement manifested itself in increased courage in proclaiming positions that were not only independent of the positions of the government, but were in most cases defiant of them. Whereas the government looks at the drawbacks of the question of detaining the hostages in Iran, the Islamic Movement has declared its support for the measure in its newspapers.

Using the platforms of mosques [to promote the movement] has given the movement an unparalleled opportunity to win new supporters and to mobilize new groups of supporters every week.

Has the fear of the spread of the Islamic Movement and of the danger that lurks behind it led to [the effort] to begin fighting it?

The regime in Tunisia feels that it is strong now and cannot be dislodged by a movement of this kind. The party is strong and can be found everywhere: in every district, factory and administration. However, one of the officials in the party told us, "Prevention is better than a cure." The time has come for public opinion to find out the truth about those people and the objectives that cause them to take action."

Whether this is coincidental or deliberate, the timing of this campaign is suitable internationally.

The Iranian Revolution is going through a doubtful stage.

Saudi Arabia, which until recently has been far away from everything that pertained to extremist Islamic movements, has experienced such movements when the Holy Mosque was overrun.

The United States which used to regard the Islamic Movement as a barrier against communism has begun to change its plans.

The question (now) is: where can this campaign go, and what will be its results?

The opposition newspaper AL-NAY raised this question when it stated, "The effects of the labor union's political crisis of 26 January were not extinguished until the country came to be on the verge of a new religious, political crisis.

"The danger of Khomeynism to the country is not imminent. Our situation cannot be considered similar to that of Iran."

Although the newspaper concludes [its account] by calling for moderation from both parties, it does agree with the regime that this movement does not represent a threat to be feared in the near future.

8592

CSD: 4402

MINISTRY OF POWER PURGES DIRECTORS

Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 16 Jan 80 p 2

[Text] The Purge Committee of the Ministry of Power has fired ten of its managing directors from the former regime. A spokesman of this ministry named them as follows: Emir Hoseyn Shakib, former managing director of water of the Esfahan district; Mohammad Zahir, former administrative deputy in the Majles of the Ministry of Power and former water and power director of the province of Hormozgan; Azizollah Keykeshan, former operations manager of the Tehran District Water Organization and deputy of the Water Unit of the Ministry of Power; Seyf Od-Din Mer'ashi, former managing director of the Fars district; Esma'il Ya'ni Zand, former managing director of the Water Organization of the Fars district; Mosbah Jalinus, former managing director of power of Tehran and TAVANIR; Kiomars Ma'qul, former administrative deputy in the Majles of the Ministry of Power; Hassan Firuz Abadian, former managing director of power of the districts of Khorasan and Tehran; Gholam Reza Hezrati Ashtiani, former deputy chief of the Power Unit of the Ministry of Power; Faribarz Darafshar, former deputy of security of the Ministry of Power and general manager of the Council of Adjudication and Complaint Investigation of the Ministry of Power.

CSO: 4906

COMMUNIST ORGAN CALLS FOR PROTECTION OF KHOMEYNI'S LIFE; 'YES' VOTE

Tehran THE FLAME in English 3 Dec 79 p 14

[The following statement was issued by the Tehran daily newspaper MARDOM, organ of the Communist Tudeh Party.]

[Text] Now that its illegitimate interests are in jeopardy, rabid American imperialism, this lunatic who has lost all consciousness, will not stop short of committing any crime. The plundering White House and Pentagon pirates are busy preparing their evil plots to subdue the militant masses who, led by Imam Khomeyni, have driven them to a dead-end. One must be on the alert against the connivances of these world-predators. One must watch them with a thousand eyes, lest their lunacy reach its peak, and perhaps hit its target.

The Imam's life is subject to the greatest danger and must be protected. The enemy is all too aware that under the present particular circumstances the Imam's leadership is the revolution's life and power, and the people's secret key to unity against the enemy. Hence the enemy's greatest threats are directed against this leadership.

All our people's consciousness and vigilance must be turned into a fence encircling the Imam's life, so that his life will not be harmed in this vital struggle against the most rabid imperialism.

At these critical moments of our second revolution, the Imam's leadership is a vital requirement and must be protected. Meanwhile one should also look after the Imam's health, lest meetings, interviews and consecutive decision-making sessions wear him out too much.

Displaying the highest level of vigilance, and following the Imam's line, we shall subdue plundering American imperialism, this unharnessable lunatic.

On its front page MARDOM carries a photograph with the following caption: "Accompanied by a number of the party's leaders Comrade Nurreddin

Kianuri, first secretary of Tudeh Party of Iran's central committee, turned up at polling station No. 3 and cast his vote for the Iranian Islamic Republic's constitution."

In a box on the front page the paper prints in very large type: "In the referendum on the constitution WE shall say: 'YES'!"

CSO: 4906

UNEMPLOYED STAGE DEMONSTRATIONS THROUGHOUT COUNTRY

Tehran KAR in Persian 26 Nov 79 p 6

[Article: "Demonstrations Staged Throughout Iran by Unemployed Citizens"]

[Text] Oppressive unemployment continues. Throughout Iran millions of unemployed citizens have been looking for employment for several months for their subsistence. Some of the unemployed are workers who have been laid off. Others are school graduates who could not find employment. Those of the unemployed who live under difficult conditions and others who live under intolerable conditions have discussed their problems with the responsible authorities and the government, with little result. The following reports on the unemployed in several cities are self-explanatory.

Gachsaran--The Council of Unemployed Workers was formed in Gachsaran on 9 October. The council is comprised of five representatives of approximately 800 unemployed workers of Gachsaran. They were elected to defend the rights of this portion of the suffering class of our country's workers against the attack of foreign and local capitalists and the government which is their supporter. These workers have been unemployed and distressed for months. Through their meager savings and insignificant unemployment pay they have, so far, fed themselves and their families. The pressures of poverty and hunger, the scattered struggles of the unemployed workers and their just demands to meet the threats of the hirelings of the city's committee and the sentries of the governing council, the fraud and deceit of the city's responsible authority (authorities), i.e., the governor, the head of the city's committee, etc., made the unemployed see the need for organizing and for their struggle against the exploiters and the ruling committee supporting the exploiters. They formed ranks of struggle against the class enemies.

The welcome the unemployed workers of this city demonstrated toward the creation of this council indicated that only by organizing can the workers struggle against the capitalists and against their supporters. Meanwhile, the paid agents of the committee and the pasdaran [guards]

intended to agitate and break up the numbers of workers, but the workers' alertness neutralized those activities.

Ahvaz--On 23 October, 100 workers who had been laid off at "Reading and Bates," gathered in front of the central office of the oil company. They were protesting regarding the sums the company was not willing to pay for their work. Members of the committee arrived at the scene to disrupt the gathering, but the workers resisted and explained the purpose of their gathering. They declared that they would not leave the scene until they obtained an answer.

Birjand--On 18 November, a group of approximately 200 unemployed high school graduates representing 800 unemployed graduates of Birjand gathered at the city's Office of Education and Training, and after reading a four-article resolution, proceeded toward the governor's office.

After the governor of Birjand realized that the unemployed would not accept his promises and his lies, he showed his true face saying, "I am not a humanitarian. If necessary, I will throw you out with the force of bayonets." The governor's words arouses a strong reaction among the unemployed. Following are a few of their demands:

- a) All employed workers with over 25 years of service should retire.
- b) The hiring of military men and teachers should be prevented until the situation of the unemployed is clarified.

Meanwhile, the unemployed declared they were ready to work for the government without pay for 6 months, to cultivate the land in groups of five persons and an engineer, and were ready to work on the construction of low income housing for the Institute of the Underprivileged for an adequate salary.

Borujerd--Each time the unemployed high school graduates of Borujerd appealed to the responsible authorities, they received such unreasonable proposals as "You can become a night watchman or a construction worker." After this, they started a sit-in demonstration and then marched. The students of the city also supported them. They were carrying such slogans as, "Work should be created for the unemployed," when they met certain reactionary elements. This group attacked them with sticks, knives and knuckle dusters. After this attack on 6 November the unemployed had a sit-in demonstration at the department of justice offices. The Unemployed Citizens Coordination Council started discussions with the responsible authorities. Those participating in the sit-in demonstration arrested five of the known reactionary elements, brought them to the department of justice and delivered them to the public prosecutor of the Islamic Revolution, demanding that they be tried. However, the prosecutor wanted the case pursued administratively and the proper documents be presented. This demonstration was dispersed by an attack of opposing elements who threw stones at the demonstrators.

KDP REJECTS KOUMALAH REPORT AS 'UNFRIENDLY'

Tehran THE FLAME in English 3 Dec 79 pp 14, 15

[Statement reported by the Tudeh Party daily organ MARDOM presumably on 2 December 1979, reporting a statement issued by the Kordestan Democratic Party Central Committee.]

[Text] The following statement was issued by the Kordestan Democratic Party Central Committee at 5 pm Sunday:

"Dear fellow-citizens...Most unfortunately we have been informed that the joint statement drawn up by the Kurdish people's representative delegation has been reproduced by the Revolutionary Organization of Iranian Kordestan's Toilers (Koumalah) with the following headline printed in large type: "Referendum boycotted." We consider the addition of the phrase 'referendum boycotted', which was not included in the original statement, as an immoral and unfriendly act, most harmful to future cooperation. It must be pointed out that the joint statement was meant to announce 'abstention' from the referendum and not 'boycotting' it. We remind the Koumalah friends for the last time that in the future our party will never tolerate such distortions of joint statements."

CSO: 4906

FISHING EXPECTED TO BE FUTURE FOREIGN EXCHANGE SOURCE

Tehran THE FLAME in English 3 Dec 79 p 14

[Article from the above news bulletin taken from the Tehran daily paper KEYHAN of 3 December 1979.]

[Text] The biggest school of fishing technology in the Middle East will be set up in Bandar Abbas, following which fishing and exports of sea animals will become the country's second source of foreign exchange after oil. In an exclusive interview with KEYHAN Coastal Province governor-general Morteza Bazargan spoke about the project. "After Bandar Abbas steel industries project was transferred to Esfahan," he said, "we decided to turn its building into a large school of fishing technology. The idea behind this project is to establish a productive system instead of a consumer one, i.e. replacing the traditional method of fishing--waiting for the catch--with modern practical ones which include deep sea fishing and sailing to far away oceans in search of sea food resources.

"When the school is set up our country, like Japan and Korea, will sign contracts with other countries, enabling Iranian fishermen to sail to Madagascar waters, for instance...This project will also create jobs for people living along the coastline. ...If we are able to draw up a good programme, and make good use of the school, a good deal of foreign exchange will flow into the country, and I believe this would be our second source of foreign exchange after oil.

"Those admitted to the school must have school certificates equivalent to the first year of high-school, and will be trained in fishing, deep-freezing, processing, canning, net-weaving, navigation, ship mechanics and piloting. The education period will consist of one year of general training, in addition to one or two years of specialised practical training.

"The expenses of setting up the school will be covered by oil income for the current year; and after that the Education Ministry will finance the school."

IRAQ PRESSURES BULGARIA TO EXPEL IRAQI COMMUNISTS

Paris AL-NAHAR AL-'ARABI WA AL-DUWALI in Arabic 31 Dec 79-6 Jan 80 p 23

[Article: "The Oil Weapon Expels the Iraqi Communists from Bulgaria"]

[Text] The visit to Iraq by Bulgarian Deputy Prime Minister Andrey Lukanov achieved more than one result for both sides. The visit put a stop to the increase in tension in the relations between the two sides, after last month's clashes between refugee Iraqi communists in Bulgaria and Ba'thi students, which resulted in the death of a student named Kamal Khalil Ibrahim.

The visit also ensured Bulgaria a continued flow of Iraqi oil, while the socialist camp countries are suffering from a severe oil crisis after the Soviet Union limited its supplies of oil to its allies.

Furthermore, the letter of apology from the president of the republic, which the Bulgarian official delivered to Iraqi President Saddam al-Husayn, opened the door to Iraqi flexibility, after the vehement boycott resolutions adopted by the Iraqi government as a result of the incident.

Iraq had suspended all its commercial and economic import and export dealings with Bulgaria, as well as cultural relations and the programs for implementing trade agreements.

In his letter, Bulgarian President Todor Zhivkov declared the Bulgarian government's willingness to fully guarantee that these incidents would not be repeated in the future, and Bulgaria's willingness to form a joint Iraqi-Bulgarian commission to investigate all the circumstances which led to the clashes.

Official Iraqi sources said that Iraq would accept nothing less than the expulsion from Bulgaria of everyone who is damaging relations between the two countries; this means the expulsion of Iraqi communists to whatever other country they desire, according to what the sources themselves say.

These sources explained the Iraqi position by saying that Bulgaria is not a liberal state and can contain whatever happens in its territory, "although we are not saying that it supervises everything which happens."

The Iraqi president expressed to the Bulgarian deputy prime minister his desire that the persons responsible for the crime be handed over.

In the diplomatic context, the Iraqi-Bulgarian commission will be formed and will conduct investigations into the incident. But practically speaking, a decision on this matter is political and should come from the Bulgarian government.

It is believed that the Bulgarian government will not expel the Iraqi communists, but will prudently limit their political activity. Under pressure from the Iraqi government, it might be forced to expel some token communist refugees.

As for the students who returned to Baghdad at the Iraqi government's request, they will return to pursue their studies in Bulgaria after the investigatory commission is formed and begins functioning.

8559

CSU: 4802

NEW BAGHDAD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT'S FEATURES OUTLINED

Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 23 Dec 79 p 7

[Article: "Work Is Continuing On the New Baghdad International Airport"]

[Text] Work is continuing on the new Baghdad International Airport, which is being built by the State Roads and Bridges Organization at a cost of 245 million Iraqi dinars.

A source at the organization said that most of the service installations and housing for workers on the project, which is considered one of the largest airports in the world, will be finished soon.

He explained that the 3-year project will be completed in June 1982, since two international companies are helping to build it in accordance with the most modern, internationally advanced specifications.

The new design for the airport will meet all the service requirements of travellers, in addition to future increases in domestic and foreign air travel up to the year 2000.

The yearly figure for travellers, in addition to transit travellers, will be 4 million by 1990 and 9.5 million by 2000, while the yearly flight figure will be 27,000 flights in 1990 and 46,000 in 2000.

The airport will have 18 fixed bays for airplanes, directly connected to the passenger terminals, and each one will be able to provide the necessary services without affecting the operation of the various facilities. There will be an additional four reserve bays to be used whenever needed.

The source added that the new airport will consist of seven main installations, including passenger terminals with two floors for arrivals and departures and another floor below ground. Each building is designed to dock six planes at one time. In addition, there will be other buildings connected to the passenger terminals, having four floors and a basement, to house offices for Iraqi Airlines and other world airlines.

The airport will also have a VIP building to receive presidents, kings and important personages, a communications building, a control tower, and air freight buildings, in addition to a runway 4 kilometers long and 60 meters wide, taxiways 30 meters wide with 7.5 meter shoulders on each side, a parking area for airplanes, 15 kilometers of main roads and overpasses with three lanes in each direction, and a number of intersections with overpasses.

The source stated that there will be a number of service installations adjacent to the airport, including restaurants to ensure travellers' food needs at the rate of 5,000 meals a day, maintenance and firefighting services, aircraft parking areas, an incinerator, side streets, and a three-level parking garage for 3,000 vehicles.

8559

CSO: 4802

STATE CONTRACTS COMPANY IMPLEMENTING WATER, SEWER PROJECTS

Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 20 Dec 79 p 7

[Article: "New Water and Sewer Projects Costing 200 Million Dinars for 1980"]

[Text] As part of its 1980 plan, the State Contracts Company is implementing a number of water and sewer projects in various governorates which will cost more than 200 million Iraqi dinars.

This was announced by Company President Engr 'Adnan Jasim Muhammad, who said that 95 percent of these projects are being directly implemented.

He explained that the company, in accordance with the law by which it was established, has devoted itself totally to carrying out projects as a contractor, which has given the company a greater incentive to speed up the work.

He indicated that among the most important projects to be constructed in 1980 are the first stage of the Western Desert irrigation project, which will cost 12 million dinars; water and sewer networks costing 30 million dinars for new residential areas in al-Mahmudiyah; and sewer networks and purification plants for al-Qiyarah, in Nineveh Governorate, to cost 2 million dinars.

Also included are water projects in Karbala', al-Diwaniyah, and Ya'qubah, to provide these cities with pure water.

Projects currently under construction include the sewer water purification project in al-Rustamiyah, which is 50 percent complete; the sewer network project for the city of al-Nasiriyah; and the main northern sewer project.

The company is also constructing a huge main sewer network in Madinat al-Thawrah, which will provide the city with an extensive main sewer network 137 kilometers long costing more than 12 million dinars.

On the basis of President Saddam Husayn's directives about the need to speed up work on the project, the company is exerting exceptional efforts to complete the project in record time, before the 3-year target date.

The company is now constructing a number of water and sewer networks for residential buildings in Zayunah, al-Sayyidiyah and al-Iskandariyah.

Referring to the pure water projects the company is implementing, the company president said that they include water projects for al-Falujah, al-Musib, al-Iskandariyah, al-Samawah, al-Rumaythah and Diyana in Irbil Governorate.

8559

CSO: 4802

PETROCHEMICAL, IRON AND STEEL COMPLEXES WILL AID NATIONAL PRODUCTION

Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 21 Dec 79 p 7

[Article: "Preliminary Start-up of Two Huge Petrochemical and Iron and Steel Complexes Set For Early Next Year"]

[Text] Early next year two huge petrochemical and iron and steel complexes in Basrah Governorate will be put into preliminary operation.

The two projects were designed to produce 150,000 tons of assorted plastic products a year, and quantities of iron and steel products amounting to about 350,000 tons of iron, 30,000 tons of iron pipe, and 1.6 million tons of sponge iron a year.

The first project is intended for the petrochemical industry, and is considered the largest project of the national development plan. Construction began on it in mid-1976, and it will cost 350 million Iraqi dinars. It contains 12 production units to ensure all the products and primary materials used in most of the nation's cable industries and other industrial products, and to meet the requirements of the plastic house industry and produce materials to cover agricultural canals and package agricultural produce.

It will also meet the housing and construction projects' needs for ready-made parts for prefabricated houses and plastic tiles.

In the household industries sector, the project will ensure plastic household products, children's toys, and furniture.

The project, which runs on natural gas extracted from the national oil company's fields in Basrah and on industrial salt from the al-Faw salt fields, will produce 130,000 tons of ethylene, 42,900 tons of chlorine, 42,000 tons of caustic soda, and 66,000 tons of VCM each year.

Approval is now being obtained for a central plan to determine the specific industrial projects which will use the products of this complex, in such a way that its products will be sufficient for manufacturing preparatory to the start of construction on the second petrochemical complex.

The State Petrochemical Installation in Khawr al-Zubayr has prepared a plan for beginning a test run of the complex early in 1980, preparatory to offering its products on the local markets the same year, so that actual industrial operation can begin in November 1980.

The installation has approved a plan for arranging for the complex's technician requirements; 2,120 technicians and engineers have already been prepared while 1,000 technicians are now undergoing training in various branches of the petrochemical industry.

The iron and steel complex, where a test run of two of the three 70-ton capacity blast furnaces has begun, will ensure the country's needs for Shillman [transliterated] and iron angles and various bars and rods for construction purposes.

The complex contains a sponge iron project to produce 1.2 million tons a year in two production units, so as to supply the iron and steel mills with the principal material for iron production. Its total cost is about 82 million dinars, and it is hoped that the first unit will begin its test run soon and that the second unit will begin production during the first quarter of 1980. The complex's smelting and casting unit includes four electric furnaces, two continuous casting machines, and six production lines for each machine. These units' production will rely 80 percent on the sponge iron produced by the complex and 20 percent on scrap iron.

8559

CSO: 4802

BRIEFS

ROAD, LAND RECLAMATION PROJECTS--On the occasion of the country's celebration of the 59th anniversary of the founding of the Iraqi army, a number of road, bridge and land reclamation projects costing 103 million Iraqi dinars will be inaugurated or begun. The Ministry of Public Works and Housing will inaugurate, or lay cornerstones for, a number of projects in Basrah Governorate costing more than 20.92 million dinars, among them the al-Kifah Cooperative road, an iron bridge over the al-Salihiyah River, and a iron window frame plant. The projects for which cornerstones will be laid include a building for the Basrah appeals court, a building for the Basrah real estate bank, bridges in al-Madinah, al-Karmah and al-'Assaf, and a number of bridges on the Basrah-Abu-al-Khusayb road. The road projects to be opened also include the 11-kilometer Tuz-Zankali road, the 80-kilometer Dabbuni-Jisan-Badrah road, the 14-kilometer Kumsaban-Khanzad road, the 25-kilometer Khalifan-Kurk road, the 42-kilometer Atrushi-Ashfati road, and the 30-kilometer Sankaw-Qarahdiagh road, as well as other roads. A number of bridges will also be opened, among them the third Mosul bridge and the new al-Rumaythah bridge in al-Muthanna Governorate. The projects for which cornerstones will be laid include the al-'Azmiyah bridge, the second al-Nasiriyah bridge, and the al-Qiyarah bridge. The projects to be carried out by the State Soils and Land Reclamation Organization include construction of an irrigation water pumping station for al-Jut al-Dabbuni Farm to provide water for 75,000 dunams, in addition to cornerstones for a number of agricultural offices and 20 houses for personnel of the al-Shuhaymiyah reclamation project. [Text] [Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 30 Dec 79 p 6] 8559

CSO: 4802

KUWAIT

BRIEFS

BREZHNEV LETTER TO EMIR--Last month Amir of Kuwait Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah received a letter from Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev explaining the friendship treaty signed between South Yemen and the Soviet Union. Informed Gulf diplomatic sources say that the purpose behind the Soviet president's letter to the amir of Kuwait was to lessen the impact of the treaty on the Gulf states, especially with respect to South Yemen's membership in COMECON, the honorary membership conferred on it in the Warsaw Pact, and the presence of Soviet soldiers in Aden. These sources add that Moscow wants to communicate to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states its point of view with respect to this treaty, and, since Kuwait is the only Arabian Peninsula state with diplomatic representation with the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union decided to write to Kuwait. The Soviet ambassador in Kuwait delivered the letter to the amir [Text] [Paris AL-MUSTAQBAL in Arabic 22 Dec 79 p 17] 8559

CSO: 4802

LEBANON

BRIEFS

PURCHASE OF MILITARY VESSELS FALLS THROUGH--Six years ago, the Lebanese Government contracted with a West German shipbuilding company for the construction of four military vessels at a cost of \$60 million. Since the signing of the official contract, the date of delivery has been postponed twice. The first postponement was attributed to the political situation in Lebanon; the second coincided with the company's financial collapse. A Lebanese delegation, which arrived in West Germany 2 weeks ago, discovered that the company had been sold and that its new owners had later declared bankruptcy. The Lebanese Government, which has already paid one-third of the purchase price through a bank guaranteed loan, has retained a team of German lawyers to press legal charges in an attempt to recoup its losses and obtain compensation for damages. [Text] [Paris AL-MUSTAQBAL in Arabic 29 Dec 79 p 17] 9063

CSO: 4802

MAURITANIA

BCM GOVERNOR DISCUSSES AUSTERITY POLICY, CRISIS' EFFECTS

Nouakchott CHAAB in French 27 Dec 79 p 3, 7; 28 Dec 79 p 3;
29-30 Dec 79 p 3

[Interview with Dieng Boubou Farba, governor of the Central Bank of Mauritania, by CHAAB correspondent, A.B.O. El Mamy: date and place not given]

[Excerpts] "I would like, first of all, before taking up all the questions which you want to ask me to say that the BCM [Central Bank of Mauritania] is an instrument in the service of the public authorities, through which they can influence all the economic changes in Mauritania. For that reason and taking into account new policies, it intends to apply these policies with the greatest strictness, but also with the greatest understanding.

As you know, our country's situation demands sacrifices of us all. These sacrifices are necessary to the extent that our country's economic situation and its international environment are such that strict measures of agreement would be required to prevent economic and financial chaos. By way of example, the development of indices such as domestic expenditure at the current price increased, on an average, between 1973 and 1978 by about 28 percent a year, while the GNP [Gross National Product] only increased 2.6 percent a year in real terms.

Moreover, the world economic crisis cannot help but affect us unfavorably, considering

the dependence of our domestic market on outside sources of supply. Great sacrifices must be agreed upon to face it.

In any case, the Central Bank will try by all means available to apply the austerity policy which is vital for our economic survival and to lessen the negative effects of the world crisis." Such is the brief introduction which Dieng Boubou Farba, governor of the BCM made to us before the important interview which he was good enough to grant us.

[Question] Mr governor, to face the situation which prevails in the country, the CMSN [expansion unknown] has decided to enforce a policy of strict austerity. How is this policy expressed on the BCM level?

[Answer] The application of a policy of austerity has always been and still will remain the major concern of the BCM. It will be expressed here by measures connected with credit policy and foreign exchange. As regards credit policy, changes made in 1979 are mainly qualitative and not quantitative. In 1978 domestic credits only increased 9 percent compared with 1977 while in 1977 they had increased about 24.5 percent compared with 1976. The moderate increase of domestic credits in 1978 did not, for all that, affect the regular supply of the national market, which, nevertheless, is very important. I will say that the restrictions are only qualitative, because in the future, we will consider on the BCM level certain qualitative standards such as the real promise of such and such an operation, its guaranteed effectiveness etc. Taking into account the qualitative criteria which I have mentioned has allowed us to give better support to the various sectors. This support must be compatible with, on one hand, the real capacities of the sector and on the other hand with our objectives regarding sound currency management.

For 1980, we will be strict in granting support to the extent where a certain time is still needed for the economic situation to recover its normal rhythm.

[Question] Mr governor, will this new attitude about banking assistance not adversely affect the situation of enterprises?

[Answer] The decline of BCM assistance cannot help but have negative effects on enterprise treasury offices and the level

of employment. If these enterprises are profitable and have a sound financial structure, the resource of bank financing would have to be limited and would only take place for a special readjustment of their financial structures. The maintenance of a certain treasury level must be a fundamental principle of every enterprise and it would not be desirable for these enterprises to continue to think that their treasury can only be supplied by or made up of bank credits. Consequently they should, in any case, improve their management and make optimum use of the credits granted them. A sound use of these credits will allow them to repay at maturity, after this assistance has had the effect desired by the enterprise managers on the financial situation.

This does not mean that the Central Bank will systematically refuse all assistance to an enterprise who profitability has not been established. There are certainly other criteria to consider such as the social benefit of the enterprise etc.

Few Countries Do Not Make Choices

[Question] The CMSN has recommended reviewing the import system to choose products essential for large scale consumption. What measures has the BCM taken in this respect?

[Answer] I must say first that it was a much anticipated measure. It is a measure which, as I had said just now, had always been requested by the Central Bank. I must say that to my knowledge there are very few countries which do not select and plan their imports. As regards Mauritania, although we have adopted liberalizing measures on the procedural and other levels, it is not less true that, in view of the domestic imbalance of our economy, these measures are necessary. Mauritania's balance of trade mainly showed a deficit in 1977, 1978 and 1979. It will certainly be so in 1980. What do I know about 1981? This deficit of the current balance reached some 10 billion UM [expansion unknown] in 1978. It will amount to 8.5 billion UM in 1979. Consequently it is necessary to take selective measures, in view of an economic dependence on foreign countries, the continual rise of their prices and other priorities for the economic development of this country. These selective measures certainly will not lead to a shortage of essential commodities. The Ministry of Finance and Trade and the BCM have taken measures to prevent these restrictions from creating a shortage. The products involved are luxury products or products considered unessential which not only have a negative effect on our foreign

exchange reserves, but also and especially have a negative impact on consumers economic behavior through the effect of display, imitation and draining what should be private domestic saving. It is a combination of negative factors which the state must restrain, like any other country, to successfully carry out an economic policy.

[Question] What role will the BCM play in bank specialization?

[Answer] You know that the Mauritanian domestic market is rather limited after all. The Mauritanian economy is not an economy where the market predominates. It is an economy which consists to a great extent of a fairly well developed subsistence sector and a relatively weak modern sector concentrated in a few main cities.

It happens because of certain conditions which existed before independence or afterwards that we face the following situation: There are now five commercial banks in Mauritania which perform the same operations. Even the BMDC [expansion unknown] which is a development and commercial bank has a tendency to grant more commercial credits than development credits, for reasons which I will not bring up or elaborate on now. Consequently there is a very close competition among these banks, so that they believe in each bank that they must grant facilities to keep a certain clientele, whether it is desirable or less reliable. This is especially disturbing because to the extent where the capacity of these banks is limited, their capital is limited. Consequently it is a very alarming situation, in addition to other negative factors, such as unpaid credits which are a tremendous strain on the banking system.

In view of all these factors, we have considered it urgent to reorganize this system to adapt it to the economic facts in Mauritania.

It is indeed in this sense that these measures will be taken. They are already under consideration. I really think that beginning in 1980, whatever the importance of the problems and the obstacles which we are going to meet, this reorganization of the banks, which will provide the framework for a new banking system, will see the light and will be adapted to economic conditions in our country.

[Question] Mr governor, how is the ouguiya doing?

[Answer] Well, the ouguiya is doing fine!

Question According to some business circles, foreign exchange is becoming rather scarce. What is the situation exactly?

Answer I do not share this point of view. The only proof which I can supply is that foreign exchange reserves today amount to some 5.8 billion UM or reserves equivalent to imports for about 6 months.

You know that according to international standards, reserves equivalent to imports for 3 months are already a good indication.

Question Which means therefore that the businessmen do not find facilities to obtain the necessary foreign exchange at the BCM. Is this why these reports are circulating?

Answer No, I say absolutely no. No import permit endorsed by the BCM, no request for a transfer has been stopped at any level, except for lack of foreign exchange. I have said, I say it and I assert it and I ask anyone to come and seek the proof.

Question For some, the Chamber of Compensation for West Africa seems a little like the franc zone. Is this well founded?

Answer Absolutely not. The Chamber of Compensation has nothing to do with the franc zone for the simple reason, moreover, that it includes many countries which are not members of the franc zone.

There are all the member countries of the CDEAO expansion unknown with the exception of Cape Verde and Mauritania--the BCM was authorized in August to join the Chamber of Compensation. I believe that operations will start beginning in January 1980.

The purpose of the Chamber of Compensation is to facilitate intrazonal exchanges through a suitable payment system which has been set up by all the central banks. The Chamber of Compensation is one thing and the franc zone is another.

Question How does the balance of payments situation appear?

Answer Regarding the balance of payments, I told you it appeared fairly bad in 1977, 1978 and 1979 in spite of the

improvements which took place in 1978 with respect to 1977 and in 1979 with respect to 1978. On the level of the balance of trade, the deficit is fairly large.

In 1977 and even in 1978 this deficit was due to a drop in the quantity of exports by SNIM [National Industrial and Mining Company] and a decline in the proceeds from its exports due to a drop of the price of iron ore on the international market. The situation is also explained by the magnitude of exports in 1977, 1978 and 1979: imports of products of all kinds, consumer products, equipment goods and various less useful products etc...

On this level, I should say that imports of some products dressed us--on the level of the BCM--I mean textile imports which reached almost 1 billion in 1979, the same figure as in 1978.

As there are no very important restrictions and as there was a liberalization in 1978 and even before which continued somewhat in 1979, these imports reached rather substantial figures.

Consequently, all this was expressed in a balance of trade deficit which was on the order of 10 billion in 1978 and 9 billion in 1979. However you are aware that there was a drop, by the figure I just gave you.

This drop in 1978 compared with 1977 and 1979 compared with 1978 was due to an increase in iron ore exports and a drop in imports of consumer goods and products of all kinds without, for all that, there being a strain on the domestic market or a shortage of essential commodities as you have realized. That is on the level of the balance of trade.

Still as regards the overall balance, the situation is fairly different, the deficit is smaller for we have had fairly substantial foreign assistance both in 1977 and 1978 and even in 1979.

[Question] One opinion questions the value of the ouguiya with respect to the other currencies. What do you think about it?

[Answer] You can think what you want to about the value of the ouguiya with respect to other currencies, but I will answer this question with two assertions. First we Mauritians are used to a monetary system where the currency is

convertible. We have not experienced the situation of countries where unconvertible national currencies exist. Based on that, I will say that in the African countries with unconvertible national currencies--in any case, I believe it is the great majority--in comparing the currency of these countries with ours restrained on the domestic level, since it involves unconvertible currencies--I believe that we can claim that our currency is doing very well, relatively speaking.

In regard to the exchange market on the international level, our currency is not quoted there, but we have a very suitable quotation method, which has been approved by the International Monetary Fund, which approximates the situation in our economy as close as possible. Based on this quotation system, our currency remains very stable with respect to convertible currencies.

The exchange reserves are fairly substantial and allow us to import all the goods we wish, to pay for them in the foreign exchange of the contract and to provide travelers with the amounts they need, if these trips are justified and useful.

As regards domestic credits, these credits are not granted ill-advisedly; then allocation is supervised, the BCM watches their rate of increase. I do not see how you could say, on the basis of these facts, that our national currency is depreciated with respect to other currencies.

Generally speaking, even the big countries which have currency reserves, which of them is not experiencing currency problems now? What country does not step into the exchange market to support its currency?

We are experiencing on the international market a crisis in the matter of international economic relations, like all other countries, both underdeveloped as well as developed.

Consequently it is foolish to say that the ouguiya is depreciating with respect to unconvertible or convertible currencies.

[Question] You have just mentioned sacrifices to be assumed by all institutions and citizens in the situation the country is now going through.

How would these sacrifices be shouldered on the BCM level?

[Answer] On the BCM level, that would depend on what sector.

The BCM as an institution, as an administration, consequently it has known the policy of austerity in its day to day management even before 1979.

Retrenchment and an austerity policy were already introduced this year at the BCM in connection with our operational expenses.

I believe that as for the other administrations, whether it involves public establishments or the central or territorial administration, it is a situation which everyone is now trying to control.

Everyone, taking into account the speciality of his administration, is trying to find effective measures which allow them to set up an austerity policy for expenses in their administrations and the BCM--I believe--is in the forefront.

[Question] Have you any plan for improving and training personnel? Is the present BCM staff satisfactory?

[Answer] We have many on the BCM staff with superior training. Some of this personnel was recruited this year; others 2 years ago, others since 1973 and 1976. I must say this personnel has an admirable technical expertise and high standards of ethics. This is what has caused the BCM to get results, both as regards management as well as with respect to attitude and behavior which make it, in spite of everything, a relatively good administration.

Such being the case, training must be continuous and in the field we now have a training center in connection with the International Bank Training Center which provides courses at all levels from CAP [expansion unknown] up to a higher level.

This center began to operate last year and we have teachers who come there to give courses. Our students have passed exams this year with satisfactory results. The diplomas are infaisants [cannot identify]. The diplomas granted by this center are international diplomas.

Nevertheless, our ambition is to train personnel in this center to use them not only in the BCM in our banking system in a general way, but also to place them at the disposal of the central administrations of public establishments.

That will be a very good thing which will also help us on the technical level of our administration. As regards training, we have representatives abroad with certain banks or at the International Monetary Fund or at the World Bank to improve their management skills.

[Question] Mr governor, what are now the problems of the BCM?

[Answer] The BCM is a great institution and for this reason, it experiences many problems: problems due to the environment. It is an institution which is often not well understood and it is considered austere; consequently not very accessible to the public. Of course, we often hear like all banks, opinions about the BCM, which are not well founded, as well as about methods, policy, personnel etc. But this only fortifies us on our mission.

8490

CSO: 4400

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN INCREASES PER CAPITA INCOME

Riyadh AL-RIYADH in Arabic 9 Jan 80 p 6

/Article by Sawsan Mustafa: "How Is the Family Being Affected by the Economic Situation in the Kingdom?"/

/Text/ In our continuing review of the background of Saudi society, today's instalment deals with the economic situation and incomes, in view of their effect on the various forms of services offered to children and their families. Research provides the basic economic indices which reflect the actual picture of the economic situation in the society and the volume of public and per capita income, as well as the volume of public and family consumption in rural and urban areas. Thus the dimensions of the economic situation become apparent and the extent of society's ability to provide the requisite forms of services is consequently determined.

Gross Domestic Product

Calculating the rate of change in domestic product is of use to us in estimating probable product in the future on the one hand and reveals to us society's evolving ability to provide diverse services to all its groups, including children.

From statistics, it is clear that the gross domestic product is constantly growing. This means that the productive capacity of the various sectors and activities is increasing with each successive year. This may be ascribed to an improvement in the means and circumstances of production and the availability of modern equipment and machinery involved in various activities, as well as an increase in Saudi oil production.

The government budget is also proceeding to expand, as a result of an increase in government revenues.

There is no doubt that the development plans also play an effective role in supporting the growth rates of gross domestic product in the various sectors which are considered basic gross domestic product sources. It has

been proved that the growth rate of actual and forecasted domestic product and the non oil economy are constantly realizing a rate higher than the original and anticipated rates.

Economic Activity

The economic activities which contribute to gross domestic product composition are diverse. Preliminary estimates show that the main portion of national product composition goes to crude oil and natural gas, followed by construction, then transportation, storage, communications, retail and wholesale trade, restaurants and hotels; the remaining shares are distributed among various activities. The share of producers of services in the composition of national product is limited. To this may be added the share of import duties, which is limited also.

In addition, in comparing the anticipated growth rates of economic activity sector contribution to the composition of gross domestic product during two time periods, 1975-1980 and 1980-85, we find that the growth rates are on the increase as far as the oil, government and settled agricultural sectors and oil refining go, while the growth rate of the other sectors will decline during the second period as compared with the first.

The Future of Per Capita Income

The fact which the figures underline is that per capita income has been rising each year and that the rate of per capita share is increasing with the increase in gross domestic product in general and non-oil gross domestic product in particular.

The distribution of per capita income by area is also affected to a large degree by the nature of the dominant economic activity in each area and the degree to which these activities contribute to the composition of gross domestic product.

It has been shown that the area with the lowest per capita income in terms of gross domestic product is the Southwestern Province and that the area with the highest per capita income is the Western Province.

Income in Terms of Rural and Urban Areas

In view of the differing patterns of economic activity prevalent in urban and rural society and differences in the population and gross domestic product of both, the per capita share of gross domestic product between rural and urban areas differs. The basic rate of per capita income in urban areas totals 3,942 riyals while it reaches its maximum in non-oil transformation industries (20,310 riyals) and its minimum in agriculture--3,306.

The Economics of the Family and the Individual

Actual data on the economic levels of individuals shows that the per capita income for the population as a whole was 3,400 Saudi riyals in 1975, that the estimated per capita income of urban inhabitants was about 3,900 riyals, that the per capita income of rural inhabitants was about 2,700 riyals, and that the per capita income of bedouins was only about 800 riyals.

Figures for 1977 show that the average per capita income in urban areas was 6,200 riyals, in rural areas was 3,700 riyals and in bedouin areas was only 900 riyals.

Estimates also show that the income level is expected to rise by 60 percent between 1975 and 1980 and by 41 percent between 1980 and 1985.

Per Capita Cost of Living

Investigating the per capita standard of living in the last quarter of 1975, we find that rentals are confined to the major towns and small towns and that rentals in the former are high in proportion to the small towns, while village dwellers own their own homes and the inhabitants of farms are divided into Category One, those who harvest 50 percent of their food requirements, and Category Two, which harvests all its food requirements except for tea and sugar.

Calculating the level of per capita living costs in the last quarter of the years selected, it is clear that living costs are increasing in an obvious fashion in the big towns, followed by small towns, then villages, and that in spite of their increase in successive years, Category One farm costs of living are clearly higher than those in Category Two in view of the fact that their inhabitants produce all their food requirements except sugar and tea.

The Economics of the Intermediate Family

Estimates of the costs of living of a family consisting of six persons (by family here is meant husband, wife and four children) and the income the family requires so that it may live above the sufficiency level--meaning that the family is not in a state of poverty--show clearly that the costs of living of the family are plainly higher in urban areas than in less urban ones and that the costs of living are also higher in areas which rely on their own production for their inhabitants' food requirements.

11887

CSO: 4802

WADI AL-DAWASIR AGRICULTURAL PROJECT SUMMARIZED

Riyadh AL-RIYADH, in Arabic 9 Jan 80 p 4

/Article by 'Adnan Sadiq: "The Wadi al-Dawasir Agricultural Development Project: A Portrait of Civilization and a Step on the Road to Self-Sufficiency"/

/Text/ In the context of the Saudi government and Saudi individuals' ambitious development plan; proceeding from the premise of diversifying sources of national income, reducing dependence on a single income source and creating alternate sources, and adopting a policy of attaining self-sufficiency as far as possible; and in pursuit of the wise words of al-Fahd, the crown prince, who said "A rich nation is in reality one which can produce its food, not one which just has cash reserves," the Ministry of Agriculture and Water has prepared many studies on numerous areas throughout our rich country and has chosen the Wadi al-Dawasir area, where it has established the Wadi al-Dawasir Agricultural Project.

The Wadi al-Dawasir Agricultural Development Project aims at giving substance to the ministry's plan to achieve self-sufficiency in the production of strategic crops. Its first stage, it is estimated, will reclaim 312 hectares on which 12 strategic crops will be grown in accordance with the main lines of the ministry's agricultural development strategy, which are serious commercial exploitation, reliance on modern machinery, production of strategic crops, and the training of Saudi manpower to use the best ways and means of agricultural production.

Constant Increase in the Rate of Food Consumption

Up to 1976-77, the government distributed 42,500 hectares of virgin land to peasants. Nonetheless the government, as represented by the ministry, observed that only a meager percentage of this acreage was being exploited because of a paucity of sources of financing, well-drilling equipment and advanced irrigation systems accessible to the private sector and peasants. In addition, the acreage apportioned to peasants for exploitation was small, which made it uneconomic for production or optimum exploitation with the use of advanced farming technology.

The ministry considered that enlarging the mission assigned to it would require further expansion and assumption of the responsibility for producing strategic foodstuffs in order to limit imports of these commodities as far as possible and strive for self-reliance on their domestic production--especially since the rate of food consumption increase has been experiencing a constant rise estimated at about 5.2 percent a year between 1971 and 1980; in addition, the increase in agricultural imports has been faster than the growth of local agricultural output.

Virgin Lands

The choice for the site of this agricultural development project fell on the Wadi al-Dawasir area, because this area is remote from high-density population centers and has therefore not been exploited and is distinguished from other agricultural regions by having virgin land. Also, most of the land in this area still belongs to the government.

A study and detailed survey were actually made on this area in 1969. Agricultural resources in the form of water and crop land in this area were determined and it became apparent that this region relied on the al-Wajid formation which qualitatively and quantitatively was relatively rich in water.

After all these considerations, at the outset, beginning in the early part of 1970, specific sums were allocated for the development of the area, but serious measures were not taken on the matter until 1977.

The competent authorities made detailed studies to determine the course of development in the valley in the light of previous corresponding projects--the Harad Project, the al-Ihsa' Irrigation and Drainage Project, and the Jizan Project.

As we have pointed out above, consideration was given to determining the kingdom's food requirements and the private agricultural sector's primary agricultural materials requirements.

On this basis, an agricultural development program was set forth for the valley including both an actual beginning and startup at the same time, along with a detailed survey which would determine the requisite development area and the quantities of existing farmland there, while a start was actually made on establishment of a pilot production project to reclaim 3,000 donums in the area and use was made of four irrigation methods to select the most suitable one for future development, with emphasis on the maximum use of machinery and reduced reliance on manpower during the preliminary project period.

After the detailed survey, a 30,000-hectare area fit for farming actually was discovered in the valley.

Reclamation of 312 Hectares

The ministry signed a 5-year contract with a domestic organization for the project on 6 April 1978 at total costs of more than 52,459,000 riyals, to cover a total area estimated in the contract at 312 hectares in the first stage of development. This was to establish an agricultural development and land reclamation project in this valley to farm 13 strategic crops including wheat, corn, bersim, potatoes, sugar beets, beans, soybeans, onions, garlic, grain, lentils and sunflowers. Production was to be in economic quantities to meet the needs of the greatest possible number of people and there was to be a field study of the yield of these crops, keeping those which were suitable for the climate of the region and eliminating those which were unsuitable, then finally concentrating on strategic crops and production in quantities which would cover the local market in the beginning then gradually saturate local markets. The domestic organization would take charge of the process of marketing and selling the produce; in exchange it would receive a commission on this process, while the basic return would revert to the government; thus, this economic agricultural development project would have two sides to its activity: attainment of self-sufficiency, or quasi self-sufficiency, in strategic crops, and diversification of domestic sources of income at the same time.

The beginning of the project assumed two stages:

In the first stage, which comprised the basic equipment stage, capital equipment and accessories were imported. This stage took about 10 to 12 months.

The second stage, the operating stage, continued for a period of 4 years after conclusion of the first stage. Among the objectives of the second stage, as specified in the ambitious contract conditions, were two fundamental goals--the experimental one of growing crops and the simultaneous one of direct production. The experimental stage included the testing of suitable modes of irrigation, using the four modern methods which had been selected, and the testing of crop cultivation and suitable crops, eliminating those which were not suitable, in accordance with the nature and the climate of the region, striving for abundant production of basic strategic crops as far as possible in order to meet actual domestic requirements.

The Difficulty at the Beginning and Output

At the beginning it was extremely difficult to create green life on land consisting of a collection of desert and little pastures, in areas unsuitable for concentrated population on the sand dunes which surrounded the valley on all sides.

However, the ambitious personnel and their righteous leaders insisted on turning these bleak arroyos into a garden, and this project took form as a lofty citadel in the midst of the desert and a portrait of civilization

bearing witness to and speaking of the extent of the progress which the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia had attained in the realm of agriculture, land reclamation, the use of the most up to date equipment in farming, agricultural progress and modern technology.

A number of project installation facilities were built, among them:

Housing units: these consisted of 30 new housing units built in the most modern fashion, comprising two complexes, one containing family houses for people working on the project who had families and the other consisting of 18 housing units for unmarried people working on the project.

In addition, there was a kitchen outfitted with the most modern possible equipment, a recreation hall containing all existing recreation facilities, and washing machine rooms for people residing on the project lands.

Agricultural facilities: these consisted of three installations for storing seeds, comprising modern silos for storing grain and an integrated maintenance shop outfitted with the most up to date modern maintenance equipment, alongside another unit for storing products and agricultural raw materials, a storehouse for fertilizer, insecticides and herbicides, a pen for keeping the agricultural machinery used on the project lands, and fuel tanks.

Four Irrigation Systems

The Wadi al-Dawasir Agricultural Development Project was based on four irrigation systems, the objective being to test all four in order to examine and ascertain the system or systems appropriate for the area, which would subsequently be used in future project agricultural expansion activities. These four irrigation systems comprised the most modern international equipment developed, discovered and used in the most modern technical agricultural systems in the advanced countries and were, as follows:

1. Two revolving irrigation system units with a capacity of 80 hectares each, both covering an irrigation area estimated at 160 hectares.
2. A fixed irrigation system unit with a capacity of 48 hectares.
3. A mobile irrigation system unit with a capacity of 2 hectares.
4. A drip irrigation system with a capacity of 19 hectares.

However, these systems have not yet been used at maximum capacity since there was not enough water in the preliminary stages and the entire project area had not been planted. Their capacity will be increased in future stages when planting of the area to be developed is completed.

Sources of energy on the project land were secured by the construction of three electricity units to produce operating power. The capacity of each unit is about 3,000 kilowatts. They work in shifts in operating the irrigation and pumping equipment and serve farming and housing facilities and installations.

A station resembling the water gathering and pumping station will be built in future stages. A visitor to the area will observe that the integrated project land area has been surrounded by a wind barrier of trees and tamarisks. Grapevines and citrus trees will be planted this year.

Visitors to the area truly confirm that all three irrigation systems have been put in operation and that three main strategic crops--wheat, bersim and corn--have been planted. In addition there are numerous wind barriers and other secondary crops, within the context of the 13 abovementioned crops.

This important, vital project, which is to be considered a mirror of Saudi culture and development in the agricultural sphere, is linked with the city of Riyadh by a direct radio system and it is possible to contact the project directly from the city of Riyadh.

T-- Project Observation Station and Soil Laboratory

The ministry considered that in order to round out the development project an observation station would have to be constructed. An agricultural observation station has in fact been erected within the confines of the project and coordination has occurred between the Agricultural Development Department and the hydrology sections in order that the station may have the most modern systems and may be in line with the optimum system followed in stations similar to this. The station currently observes and measures rainfall, evaporation rates, atmospheric temperatures and wind direction and velocity to help in development of the agriculture in this area.

A soil laboratory has also been built within the project facilities; this conducts repeated testing activities on the type and suitability of the soil for crops now being cultivated on the project lands in order to concentrate on those crops which are suitable. The laboratory has been outfitted with the most modern high-technology testing equipment.

Use of 25 Percent of Irrigation Capacity

The water present and exploited in the project is drawn from the al-Wajid formation. There the wells are about 3,700 /meters/ below ground level. In most locations within the project lands, the wells are artesian. The number of wells irrigating the project and in full use at present number five. One of them has a productive capacity estimated at 2,900 gallons per second. In addition there are the test (experimental) wells which the consulting firm drilled when work on the project land began.

The area currently being farmed, and its crops, may be summarized as:

Corn: About 20 hectares of this have now been cultivated; this is being irrigated by the axial irrigation system. The cultivated area accounts for about 25 percent of the maximum productive capacity of the irrigation system. God willing, the area under cultivation will be increased in the following project development stages, which are to come soon:

Bersim: about 38.6 hectares are being cultivated, broken down into three areas according to the irrigation systems used here:

The axial irrigation system, irrigating about 20 hectares.

The lateral irrigation system, irrigating about 10 hectares.

The fixed irrigation system, irrigating about 8.6 hectares.

Wheat: this is grown on an area estimated at about 70 hectares. Some output has actually been marketed this year; this year wheat output came to approximately 161,200 kilograms, which earned about half a million riyals for the Saudi grain silos.

Feasible Production

This is considered the equivalent of preliminary output and constitutes a great victory for the prospects of taming the desert and turning it into a green garden. The production is considered feasible, when one considers that it is preliminary and entails a number of experiments, obstacles and a transitional stage within the context of a Saudi society headed toward the attainment of near self-sufficiency in strategic crops.

When the area was surveyed, about 30,000 hectares of arable land were discovered. If this area were planted with wheat alone over an area of just 20 of these 30 /thousand/ hectares, it would yield about 80,000 tons of wheat at one time; this is a large share of our imports of this crop.

Through the experimental farm (the test project) in the area, an appropriate system was chosen for general use throughout the region. It also became clear that the agricultural resources available are excellent.

The ministry is now conducting detailed study in cooperation with the Food and Agricultural Organization to determine the system and pattern for future agricultural exploitation on our motherland's rich lands in the Wadi al-Dawasir area. Once the picture had become clear and thoroughly rounded out, the ministry set out a development policy of development in this sensitive area based on:

Serious commercial investment.

Nearly total reliance on modern machinery.

Production of crops of a strategic nature which may be stored, processed and transported.

Training of Saudi manpower to manage the green oasis in the desert.

Officials in the ministry consider, as do visitors to the area, that Wadi al-Dawasir will in the very near future be transformed into our precious country's breadbasket.

If the agricultural development set forth for the region follows its natural course and the opportunity is provided, the Kingdom may start to be self-sufficient in production of the strategic wheat crop in a manner which will be adequate and surplus to the requirement of the domestic markets. This is the most important victory which can be achieved in the project, since the current food situation is one of reliance on imports to a large degree. The gravity of this process is not lost on the reader; consequently, the need for planning to develop and stimulate the domestic farming of strategic basic crops is of importance in the attainment of self-sufficiency.

Thus Saudi will and wise leadership have managed to overcome the obstacles facing agricultural development in the kingdom. They have managed to overcome the climatic and natural obstacles in the form of shortages, poor quality of water resources and sand encroachment which constitute the main characteristic of the climate in the kingdom. They have managed to overcome the problem of the breakdown of farmlands into small plots over vast areas.

The preliminary evidence is that it is possible to achieve self-sufficiency, indeed to diversify national income sources. The Wadi al-Dawasir Development Project for agricultural development has been a vivid, articulate picture of the tremendous development the kingdom is witnessing in all facilities and major installations.

It is the first stage of a project which will experience a greater expansion in coming years in the opinion of Food and Agricultural Organization experts, who are now conducting a lengthy study on project expansion on a broadened commercial scale and context, to meet the kingdom's need for basic strategic grains, now that its economic feasibility has been established.

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DOMESTIC FOOD SUPPLY, DEMAND SURVEYED

Jiddah 'UKAZ in Arabic 26 Dec 79 p 5

/Article by Sadiq 'Ali Ahmad: "Our Agricultural Products between Supply and Demand"/

/Text/ The water and agricultural sector is considered one of the most important of the sectors /the country/ relies on in diversifying its sources of national income. Thus priority has been given to the sector of agriculture and water in national development policy.

The Development Plan

1. To raise the sufficiency level and increase crop output and livestock production.
2. To develop, preserve and exploit pastures and woodlands properly.
3. To develop the kingdom's fish resources and develop the fish industry.
4. To develop and maintain water resources and exploit them properly on sound scientific bases.
5. To Diversify the country's crop output.

Proceeding from these general objectives, it was natural that concentration would be placed on the basic needs for growth in distributing investments, experiments and surveys both preliminary and detailed in nature, considering that these are the basis for ascertaining the country's resources and natural and water sources, preparatory to developing them in sound ways, in addition to developing and improving actually known resources. Equal to this in importance, and concurrent with it in timing, are expenditures to prepare experts and manpower development in every sector to make it possible to put the development plan into implementation.

To supply these goals, the Ministry of Agriculture and Water did a survey, study and evaluation of the country's water and agricultural resources,

including social and rural conditions. To carry out this sort of comprehensive survey, the ministry proceeded to break the kingdom down into eight regions, assigning the study of six regions to three international firms, which have completed their studies; preparation is now being made for a survey of the other two areas.

The results of the comprehensive survey of water and agricultural resources in the kingdom show that the topography and soil of some territories are suitable for farming and that the possibilities of groundwater reserves which can be replenished are to a large extent encouraging. The ministry has taken up irrigation, drainage and land reclamation projects, and has finished allocating the most important funding to agricultural output and guidance of farmers in sound irrigation water use methods.

With the objective of expanding vertical agricultural development, the ministry has proceeded to introduce modern agricultural techniques into agricultural output by encouraging farmers to use new kinds of high-yield, disease-resistant seeds and to pursue modern drainage methods. It has also striven to encourage expansion in the use of chemical fertilizers and farm machinery as well as applying an encouragement bonus system which offers farmers, among them raisers of livestock (sheep, goats and camels), material aid, equipment for poultry and dairy farms, cattle and crop transportation, and palm seedlings, in addition to fodder, fertilizer and agricultural machinery subsidies suited to production and local environment needs.

Plant Production

Grain is considered to be one of the most important of food crops. The kingdom, according to data for 1975-76, produces about 230,000 tons of wheat, which represents 25 percent of total consumption in the kingdom, and the grain area in the recent period came to /missing/.

Vegetable production in the kingdom occupies second place, after grain. The food resources are good, especially since some of them, such as tomatoes, onions, and watermelons, whose production came to about 250,000 tons in 1975-76, are exported to gulf countries at specific times. In addition, potato farming as a food crop produced for carbonhydrates has been a success, and it has been possible to introduce potatoes to 14 of the agricultural and water departments in the kingdom this year; the potato farming project was adopted in 1976. It was possible to produce a total of 2,000 tons locally in 1978.

A warehouse with a storage capacity of 200 tons has been constructed for cold storage of potato seeds at al Kharj, and a start has been made on the construction of cold storage warehouses in al-Qusaym and al-Hufuf with a storage capacity of 500 tons apiece.

To provide vegetables in volumes which will meet the main towns' requirements in all seasons, farming under controlled environment conditions

(protected farming) has been introduced through the use of greenhouses, or plastic houses, supplied with temperature and humidity control devices. In addition, modern irrigation equipment is being used which has the effect of limiting water consumption, using the drip system, spraying or spreading (vapor).

Dates head the fruit crops produced in the kingdom.

Fish Resources

The kingdom has long stretches of coastline on the Red Sea and the Arab Gulf. On the Red Sea, where its shores extend for a distance of approximately 1,850 kilometers, most of the coast consists of coral reefs, except for the Arkhabil and Farasan plains and some small plains on the coasts at al-Wajh and al-Khuraybah. The coast also extends for a distance of about 500 kilometers on the Arab Gulf, where extensive fishing activities have taken place since ancient times along both shores. However, the fishing methods followed in the past have not been considered economically feasible in the face of the waves of diversified job sources in competing areas; as a result, willingness to engage in fishing has declined in recent times. Therefore the development strategy the government has adopted includes attention to fish resource development and the preparation of necessary studies for development of fish catch areas and existing fishing activities. Numerous studies and much research are being carried out in this field on the local and regional levels.

One coastal laboratory has also been built in Jiddah along with one in al-Dammam. This study and research has the objective of developing and improving fish resources; there are related studies on fishing harbors and the extent and importance of building modern fishing harbors, providing them with special ice plants, providing fishermen's ice requirements at cost price, and providing special piers for fishermen's skiffs. The study also included means for processing fish by cold and hot smoking; in addition there has been a study on the possibility of creating marine fish farms in the kingdom and a study on modern fish markets.

It is also expected that these will include other studies on the marine environment from the physical, biological, chemical, geological, and geophysical standpoints--fish, shellfish and plankton catch areas, and so forth.

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